

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

If a tracking pattern superimposed on print data is discriminated, a malicious user may tamper the pattern, resulting in a deterioration in the reliability of the tracking pattern itself. According to this invention, therefore, a tracking pattern generating unit generates a tracking pattern, and a data addition processing unit adds the tracking pattern to image data. An encryption processing unit encrypts the image data to which the tracking pattern is added to make it difficult to detect that the tracking pattern is added, and transmits the resultant data to a printing apparatus. This makes it difficult to discriminate the tracking pattern from the image data, thus providing the highly reliable tracking pattern.